

20. 87. 1796-1857
Personalities and Aggressions of Mr. Butler.

SPEECH OF HON. HENRY WILSON,

OF MASSACHUSETTS,

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,

JUNE 13, 1856.

Mr. BUTLER having concluded the speech which he commenced yesterday, addressing the State of Massachusetts and Mr. SUMNER. Mr. WILSON obtained the floor, and spoke as follows:

Mr. PRESIDENT: I feel constrained, by a sense of duty to my State, by personal relations to my colleague and friend, to trespass for a few moments upon the time and attention of the Senate.

You have listened, Mr. President—the Senate has listened—these thronged seats and these crowded galleries have listened, to the extraordinary speech of the honorable Senator from South Carolina, which has now run through two days. I must say, sir, that I have listened to that speech with painful and sad emotions. A Senator of a sovereign State, more than twenty days ago, was stricken down senseless on the floor for words spoken in debate. For more than three weeks he has been confined to his room upon a bed of weakness and of pain. The moral sentiment of the country has been outraged, grossly outraged, by this wanton assault, in the person of a Senator, on the freedom of debate. The intelligence of this transaction has flown over the land, and is now flying abroad over the Civilized world; and wherever Christianity has a foothold, or civilization a resting place, that act will meet the stern condemnation of mankind.

Intelligence comes to us, Mr. President, that a civil war is raging beyond the Mississippi—intelligence also comes to us that upon the shores of the Pacific Lynch Law is again organized—and the telegraph brings us news of assault and murders around the ballot boxes of New Orleans, growing out of differences of opinion and of interests. Can we be surprised, sir, that these scenes, which are disgracing the character of our country and our age, are rife when a venerable Senator—one of the oldest members of the Senate, and chairman of its Judiciary Committee—occupies four hours of the important time of the Senate in vindication of, and apology for, an assault unparalleled in the history of the country? If lawless violence here, in this Chamber, upon the person of a Senator, can find vindication—it this outrage upon the freedom of debate finds apology from a veteran Senator—why may not violent outbreaks elsewhere go unrebuked?

The Senator from South Carolina commenced his discourse with an allusion to the present condition of my colleague, which I cannot say exhausted good taste. I know it personally to be grossly unjust, because I know that for more than twenty days—three weeks—Mr. SUMNER has been compelled

to lie upon a bed of pain, from the effects of blows received by him here in the Senate Chamber.

The Senator from South Carolina, I am aware, referred to the evidence of a medical person, who was accidentally employed in the early stages of the case, but who has not seen Mr. SUMNER lately. I have in my hands the testimony of his present medical adviser, a distinguished physician of this city, who has been selected for his known talents and character, and who understands his present condition. The Secretary will please to read his letter, which I now send to the desk.

The Secretary read as follows:

C STREET, June 12, 1856.

DEAR SIR: In answer to your inquiries, I have to state that I have been in attendance on the Hon. Charles Sumner, as his physician, on account of the injuries received by him in the Senate Chamber, from the 29th of May to the present time—part of this time in consultation with Dr. Perry, of Boston, and Dr. Miller, of Washington.

I have visited him at least once every day. During all this time, Mr. Sumner has been confined to his room, and the greater part of the day confined to his bed.

NEITHER AT THE PRESENT MOMENT, nor at any time since Mr. Sumner's case came under my charge, has he been in a condition to resume his duties in the SENATE.

My present advice to him is to go into the country, where he can enjoy fresh air, and I think it will not be prudent for him to enter upon his public duties for some time to come.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant.

H. LINDSLY.

HON. HENRY WILSON.

Mr. WILSON. Mr. President, this is the testimony of Dr. Lindly, known by members of the Senate, and others around me to be an eminent physician of Washington. I will say that Mr. SUMNER, and Mr. SUMNER's friends, when he was first assaulted, under-estimated altogether the force of the assault. He is a man of great physical power, in full vigor and maturity and in the glow of health. For a day or two after that assault, he believed, and his friends believed, that he would soon throw off its effects; but time disclosed the extent and force of his injuries, while he was doomed to hours of restless sleepless pain. Dr. Perry, of Boston, a gentleman of great professional eminence, accidentally in Washington expressed the strongest solicitude concerning his case. To his skill and advice I believe my colleague and his friends are under the deepest obligations. His testimony before the committee is the testimony of one who knows what he affirms. But I pass from this topic.

The Senator from South Carolina, through this de-

ate, has taken occasion to apply to Mr. SUMNER, by his speech, to all that concerns him, all the epithets—

Mr. BUTLER. I used criticism, but not epithets. Mr. WILSON. Well, sir, I accept the Senator's word, and I say "criticism." But I say, in his criticism, he used every word that I can conceive of a fertile imagination could invent, or a malignant pen could suggest. He has taken his full revenge here on the floor of the Senate—here in debate—for the remarks made by my colleague. I do not take any exception to this mode. This is the way in which the speech of my colleague should have been met—not by blows—not by an assault.

The Senator tells us that this is not in his opinion, an assault upon the constitutional rights of a member of the Senate. He tells us that a member cannot be permitted to print and send abroad over the world, with impunity, his opinions; but that he liable to have them questioned in a judicial tribunal. Well, sir, if this be so—he is a lawyer, I admit—I accept his view, and I ask, why not have stated Mr. SUMNER's speech in a judicial tribunal, and let that tribunal have settled the question whether Mr. SUMNER uttered a libel or not? Why is it necessary—why did the "chivalry" of South Carolina require that, for words uttered on this floor, under the solemn guarantees of constitutional law, a Senator should be met here by violence? Why appeal from the floor of the Senate, from a judicial tribunal, to the blade? I put the question to the Senator—to the "chivalry" of South Carolina—to "the gallant set," to use the Senator's own words, of "Ninety-Six"—why was it necessary to substitute the blade for the judicial tribunal?

Sir, the Senator from South Carolina—and, in what I say to him to-day, I have no disposition to say anything unkind or unjust, and if I utter anything which I will withdraw it at once—told us that, when my colleague came here, he came holding fanciful ideas, but that he met him, offered him his hand, and treated him with courtesy, supposing, as in other cases which had happened under his eye, that acquaintance with Southern gentlemen might cure him of his fanaticism. He gravely told us that his courtesy and attentions introduced Mr. SUMNER where he could not otherwise have gone. The Senator will allow me to say that this is not the first time during a session we have heard this kind of talk about social influence, and the necessity of association with gentlemen from the South, in order to have intercourse with the refined and cultivated society of Washington. Sir, Mr. SUMNER was reared in a section of a country where men know how to be gentlemen. He was trained in the society of gentlemen, as good society as could be found in that section of the country! He went abroad. In England and the Continent, he was received everywhere, as he is right to be received, into the best social circles, literary associations, and into that refined and polished society which adorns and graces the present day in western Europe. I do not know where any gentleman could desire to go, that Mr. SUMNER did not go without the assistance of the Senator from South Carolina, or any other person on this floor. Sir, we have heard quite enough of this. It is a penny-wood doctrine—a plantation idea. Gentlemen reared in refined and cultivated society are not accustomed to this language, and never indulge in it towards others.

The Senator from South Carolina commenced his speech by proclaiming what he intended to do and closed it by asserting what he had done. Well, I listened to his speech with some degree of attention, and I must say that the accomplishment did not come quite up to what was promised; and that, without his assurance, the Senate and the country would never have supposed that his achieve-

ments amounted to what he assured us they did in this debate.

The Senator complained of Mr. SUMNER for quoting the Constitution of South Carolina; and he assailed over and over again, and he winds up his speech by the declaration, that the quotation made is not in the Constitution. After making that declaration, he read the Constitution, and read the identical quotation. Mr. SUMNER asserted what is in the Constitution, but there is an addition to it which he did not quote. The Senator might have complained because he did not quote it; but the portion not quoted carries out only the letter and the spirit of the portion quoted. To be a member of the House of Representatives of South Carolina, it is necessary to own a certain number of acres of land, and ten slaves, or seven hundred and fifty dollars of real estate, free of debt. The Senator declared with great emphasis—and I saw nods, Democratic nods, all around the Senate—that "a man who was not worth that amount of money was not fit to be a Representative!" That may be good Democratic doctrine—it comes from a Democratic Senator, of the Democratic State of South Carolina, and received Democratic nods and Democratic smiles—but it is not in harmony with the Democratic ideas of the American people.

The charge made by Mr. SUMNER was, that South Carolina was nominally republican but in reality had aristocratic features in her Constitution. Well, sir, is not this charge true? To be a member of the House of Representatives of South Carolina, the candidate must own ten men—yes, sir, ten men—five hundred acres of land or have seven hundred and fifty dollars of real estate, free of debt; and to be a member of the Senate double is required. This Legislature, having these personal qualifications, placing them in the rank of a privileged few, are elected upon a representative basis as unequal as the rotten-borough system of England in its most rotten days. That is not all. This Legislature elects the Governor of South Carolina and the Presidential Electors. The people have the privilege of voting for men with these qualifications, upon this basis, and they select their Governor for them, and choose the Presidential electors for them. The privileged few govern; the many have the privilege of being governed by them.

Sir, I have no disposition to assail South Carolina. God knows that I would peril my life in defence of any State of this Union, if assailed by a foreign foe. I have voted, and I will continue to vote, while I have a seat on this floor, as cheerfully for appropriations, or for anything that can benefit South Carolina, or any other State of this Union, as for my own Commonwealth of Massachusetts. South Carolina is a part of my country. Slaveholders are not the tenth part of her population. There is somebody else there besides slaveholders. I am opposed to its system of slavery, to its aristocratic inequalities, and I shall continue to be opposed to them; but it is a sovereign State of this Union—a part of my country—and I have no disposition to do injustice to it.

The Senator assails Mr. SUMNER for referring to the effects of Slavery upon South Carolina in the Revolutionary era. What Mr. SUMNER said in regard to the imbecility of South Carolina, produced by Slavery, in the Revolution, is true, and more than true—yes, sir, true, and more than true. I can demonstrate its truth by the words and correspondence of General Greene, by the words and correspondence of Governor Matthews, General Barnwell, General Marion, Judge Johnson, Dr. Ramsey the historian, Mr. Gadsden, Mr. Burke, Mr. Huger, and her Representatives who came to Congress, and asked the nation to relieve her from her portion of the common burdens, because it was necessary for her men to stay at home to keep her negro slaves in subjection.

These sons of South Carolina have given to the world the indisputable evidence that Slavery impaired the power of that State in the war of Independence.

The Senator told us that South Carolina, which furnished one fifteenth as many men as Massachusetts, in the Revolution, "shed hogheads of blood where Massachusetts shed gallons." That is one of the extravagances of the Senator—one of his loose expressions, absurd and ridiculous to others—one of that class of expressions which justify Mr. SUMNER in saying that "he cannot open his mouth, but out there flies a blunder." This is one of those characteristics of the Senator which naturally arrested the attention of a speaker like Mr. SUMNER, accustomed to think accurately, to speak accurately, to write accurately, and to be accurate in all his statements. I say that such expressions as those in which the Senator from South Carolina has indulged in reference to this matter are of the class in which he too often indulges, and which brought from my colleague that remark at which he takes so much offence. But enough of this.

Sir, the Senator from South Carolina has undertaken to assure the Senate and the country to-day that he is not the aggressor. Here and now I tell him that Mr. SUMNER was not the aggressor; that the Senator from South Carolina was the aggressor. I will prove this declaration to be true beyond all question. Mr. SUMNER is not a man who desires to be aggressive towards any one. He came into the Senate "a representative man." His opinions were known to the country. He came here knowing that there were but few in this body who could sympathize with him. He was reserved and cautious. For eight months here he made no speeches upon any question that could excite the animadversion even of the sensitive Senator from South Carolina. He made a brief speech in favor of the system of granting land for constructing railways in the new States, which the people of those States justly applauded; and I will undertake to say that he stated the whole question briefly, fully, and powerfully. He also made a brief speech, welcoming Kansas to the United States. But, beyond the presentation of a petition, he took no steps to press his earnest convictions upon the Senate; nor did he say anything which could, by possibility, disturb the most excitable Senator.

On the 28th day of July, 1852, after having in this body eight months, Mr. SUMNER introduced a proposition to repeal the Fugitive Slave Act. Mr. SUMNER and his constituents believed that not to be not only a violation of the Constitution of the United States, and a violation of all the safeguards of the common law which have been garnered up for centuries to protect the rights of the people, but at war with Christianity, humanity, and human nature—an enactment that is bringing upon this Republic the imminent scorn of the Christian and civilized world. With these convictions, he proposed to repeal that act, as he had a right to propose. He had made no speech. He rose and asked the Senate to give him the privilege of making a speech. "Strike, but hear," said he—using a quotation. I do not know that he gave the authority for it. Perhaps the Senator from South Carolina will criticize it as a plagiarism—as he has criticized another application of a classical passage. Mr. SUMNER asked the privilege of addressing the Senate. The Senator from South Carolina, who now tells us that he had been his friend, an old and veteran Senator here, instead of feeling that Mr. SUMNER was a member standing almost alone, with only the Senator from New York, [Mr. SEWARD,] the Senator from New Hampshire, [Mr. HALE,] and Governor Chase, of Ohio, in sympathy with him—objected to his being heard. He asked Mr. SUMNER, tauntingly, if he wished to make an "oratorical display?" and talked about "play-

ing the ora'or" and "the part of a parliamentary rhetorician." These words, in their scope and in their character, were calculated to wound the sensibilities of a new member, and perhaps bring upon him what is often brought on a member who maintains here the great doctrines of Liberty and Christianity—the sneer and the laugh under which men sometimes shrink.

Thus was Mr. SUMNER, before he had ever uttered a word on the subject of Slavery here, arraigned by the Senator from South Carolina, not for what he ever had said, but for what he intended to say; and the Senator announced that he must oppose his speaking, because he would attack South Carolina. Mr. SUMNER quietly said that he had no such purpose; but the Senator did not wish to allow him to "make the Senate the vehicle of communication for his speech throughout the United States, to wade deeper and deeper the channel through which flow the angry waters of agitation."

Now, I charge here on the floor of the Senate and before the country, that the Senator from South Carolina was the aggressor; that he arraigned, in language which no man can defend, my colleague before he ever uttered a word on this subject on the floor of the Senate, and in the face of his express disclaimer that he had no purpose of alluding to South Carolina. This was the beginning; other instances follow.

Mr. SUMNER made, in February, 1854, a speech on the Kansas Nebraska bill, and I want to call the attention of the Senate to the manner in which he opened that speech. No man will pretend that up to that day he had ever uttered a word here to which any, the most captious, could take objection. He commenced this magnificent speech, which any man within sound of my voice would have been proud to have uttered, by saying:

"I would not forget those amenities which belong to this place, and are so well calculated to temper the antagonism of debate; nor can I cease to remember and to feel that, amidst all diversities of opinion, we are the representatives of thirty-one sister Republics, knit together by indissoluble ties, and constituting that *Plural Unit*, which we all embrace by the endearing name of country."

Thus, on that occasion, by those words of kindness, did he commence his speech, and he continued it to the end in that spirit. The effort then made might be open to opposition by argument; but there is no word there to wound the sensibilities of any Senator, or to justify any personal bitterness. And yet this speech, so cautious and guarded, and absolutely without any allusion to the Senator from South Carolina or his State, brought down upon him the denunciations and assaults of the Senator, who now complains that his own example has been in some measure followed. I intend to hold that Senator to-day to the record. Yes, sir, I have his words, and I intend to hold him responsible for them. I am accustomed to deal with facts, as that Senator will discover before I close.

A few days after this speech was delivered, the Senator from South Carolina addressed the Senate, then, as now, in a long speech, running through two days. You will find his speech in the *Congressional Globe*, pp. 2:2—140. Sir, you must read that speech, read it all through, look at it carefully, consider its words and its phrases, to understand the tone he evinced towards Mr. SUMNER and towards Massachusetts and the Northern men who stood with him. I need not say that there were bitter words, taunting words, in the speech. I was not here to listen to it, but we all know—and I say it without meaning to give offence—that the Senator from South Carolina's often more offensive in the manner which he exhibits, and he throws more of contempt and more of ridicule in that manner than he can put in his words,

and he is not entirely destitute of the ability of using words in the connection.

On page 232 we have the insinuation that Mr SUMNER is a "plunging agitator"—that is, the phrase, "plunging agitator." That is a plunging expression. I think it is one of the best expressions that brought down on the Sena or the Senate my colleague the other day. "Then we have another insinuation, that he is a 'rhetorical advocate,'" and then these words, "He has not, in my judgment, spoken with the wisdom, the judgment, and the responsibilities, of a statesman." Now, sir, doubt the propriety of my plunging in on behalf of such phrases as these—"plunging agitator," "rhetorical advocate," and then to say he has not shown "the wisdom, the judgment, and the responsibilities of a statesman."

On page 234 he says of Mr. SUMNER: "It seems to me that, if he wanted to write poetry, he would set a negro to sit for him." That is his expression, and the report says it was followed by "laughter"—whether laughter at Mr. SUMNER, or at the refined wit of the Senator from South Carolina, I cannot say, not having been present.

On page 236 he again alludes to a remark by Mr. SUMNER, saying, (to quote his own words,) "which I think even common prudence or common decency could have suggested to him that he ought not to have made."

On the same page, again alluding to Mr. SUMNER, he says:

"Our revolutionary fathers thought nothing of these *pink distinctions* which gentlemen use now to make the path odious."

Again, on the same page, alluding to other remarks of Mr. SUMNER, he says:

"They may furnish me *crisals* for what I understand is a very popular novel—Uncle Tom's Cabin. I have no doubt they may do this, but I put it to the gentleman, *are his remarks true?*"

"Are his remarks true?" was the question, full of insolence and of accusation, put to Mr. SUMNER at the face of the Senate.

And again he says:

"They dealt some hard blows, but they are not true or *stirical* facts."

So you will perceive Mr. SUMNER was not the first man to raise this question of truth and veracity on the floor of the Senate.

On the same page the Senator from South Carolina made a mis-statement of a fact, which was promptly corrected by Mr. SUMNER, and by General Shields, a member of the Senate.

On page 237 there are insinuations made of "pseudo-philanthropy," and also insinuations of "mere sequence—professions of philanthropy, a philanthropy of adoption more than of affection." Yes, sir, according to the Senator from South Carolina, the Senator from Massachusetts, and those who think with him, have "adopted" their philanthropy. It is not the "philanthropy of affection" but of adoption. "A philanthropy that professes much and does nothing, with a long advertisement and short performance." These are expressive words, and the Senator from South Carolina should remember at these words, uttered with the peculiar terms which he affects, are anything but calculated to be complimentary to my colleague or any other Senator.

On the same page, allusions which from the context, are in the nature of insinuations, are made against Mr. SUMNER and his associates, as to "those to stand aloof and hold up an ideal standard of morality, emblazoned by imagination and sustained by ignorance, or perhaps more often planted by criminal ambition and heartless hypocrisy."

"Criminal ambition and heartless hypocrisy" are terms used by the Senator from South Carolina,

in application to Senators on this floor, and to a large portion of the country which concurs with them!

On page 119, he beautifully speaks of a "machine," in reference to the people who hold Mr. SUMNER's opinions, called by Northern fanaticism. "I do not know what kind of a machine that is—a machine called by Northern fanaticism." The Senator who uses these phrases towards members of this body, and towards a section of the Union, is a Senator who tries to make us believe that he is a man who comprehends the whole country and all its interests, and who has nothing in him of the spirit of a sectional agitator! He takes great offence because my colleague holds him up as one of the chief causes of sectional agitation. I think my colleague is right; that the Senator from South Carolina is one of the chief causes of a sectionalism at war with the fundamental ideas that underlie our Democratic institutions, and at war with the repose and harmony of the country.

On page 234, he again talks about "sickly sentimentalism," and he charges that this "sickly sentimentality" now governs the councils of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. "Yes, sir, the Sena or from South Carolina makes five distinct assaults upon Massachusetts. Massachusetts cannot be governed by sickly sentimentality! Sir, Massachusetts stands to-day where she stood when the little squad of soldiers, on the 19th of April, 1775, so fire the first gun of the Revolution. The sentiments that brought those humble men to the little green at Lexington, and to the bridge at Concord—which carried them up the slope of Bunker Hill, and which drove forth the British troops from Boston, never again to press the soil of Massachusetts—that sentiment still governs the councils of Massachusetts, and rules in the hearts of her people. The feeling which governed the men of that glorious epoch of our history is the feeling of the men of Massachusetts to-day."

Those sentiments of liberty and patriotism have penetrated the hearts of the whole population of that Commonwealth. Sir, in that State, every man no matter what blood runs in his veins or what may be the color of his skin, stands up to feel the law the peer of the proudest that treads her soil. This is the sentiment of the people of Massachusetts. In equality before the law they find their strength. They know this to be right, if Christianity is true, and they will maintain it in the future as they have in the past; and the civilized world, the coming generations, those who are hereafter to give law to the universe, will pronounce that in this contest Massachusetts is right, inflexibly right, and South Carolina, and the Senator from South Carolina, wrong. The latter are maintaining the odious relics of a barbarous age and civilization—not the civilization of the New Testament—not the civilization that is now blessing and adorning the best portions of the world.

On page 234, he says:

"At the time of the passage of the law in Massachusetts abolishing slavery, pretty near all the grown negroes disappeared somewhere, and, as the gentleman expresses it, the little negroes were left there, without father or mother, and with hardly a word, were sent about as puppies, to be taken by those who would feed them."

Now, sir, the Constitution of Massachusetts was framed and went into operation in 1780. The Supreme Court decided that, by the provisions of that Constitution, slaves could not be held as bondmen in the Commonwealth. Slavery was abolished by judicial decision—abolished at once, without limitation, without time to send men out of the State. It may be that some mean Yankee in Massachusetts—and God never made a meaner man than a mean Yankee [laughter]—may have hurried his slave out of that Commonwealth, and sold him into bondage.

But Massachusetts, by one stroke of the pen of the Supreme Court, abolished Slavery forever in that State, and the slaves became freemen. They and their descendants are there to day—as intelligent as the average people of the United States, many of them being men that grace and adorn the State, who, by just and equal laws, protects them in the enjoyment of all their rights—men whom I am proud here to call my constituents, and some of whom I recognize as my friends.

On page 236, he introduced statistics into his speech, in regard to pauperism, insanity, and drunkenness, in disparagement of Massachusetts. This introduction called up Mr. Everett to respond for his State; and if gentlemen are anxious to know what he said, they have but to turn to the debates of that day—and read the words of a man a ways to be comprehended, whatever his opinions may be.

On page 240, it will be found that the Senator from South Carolina asserts that Massachusetts has been an "anti-nigger State." This is the classic phrase of the Senator from South Carolina. He said that Massachusetts was an "anti-nigger State" and that "when he had to deal with these classes of persons practically, her philanthropy became very much attenuated." Attenuated philanthropy! These are the words of the Senator who never makes assaults, who is never the aggressor! They were in reply to a speech which made no personal assault upon the Senator or upon his State. These remarks were made in regard to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

And, again, still anxious to make his lunge at Massachusetts, on page 240, he repeats the accusation that Massachusetts "treated her little slaves as puppets."

To all these personal allusions of the Senator, Mr. SUMNER made no reply. He did reply for his State, and replied fully as the occasion required, and in a manner contrasting by its moderation and its decency with that of the Senator from South Carolina. I have references to other passages in that speech by the Senator from South Carolina, but I shall not weary the Senate by quoting them. They are of the same nature and character. In this same speech, however, not content with assailing Mr. SUMNER, he went on to attack the honorable Senator from New York, [Mr. SEWARD,] and he compared him to "the condor that soars in the frozen regions of ethereal purity yet lives on garbage and putrefaction!" This is the language of an honorable Senator, who prides himself upon his elegant diction, and whose friends plume themselves upon the exceeding care with which he turns his phrases in debate.

For some time, I have been giving elegant extracts from a single speech of the Senator from South Carolina. I come here to another. On the 14th of March, 1854, he assailed the three thousand clergy men of New England who had sent their remonstrance here against the passage of the Nebraska bill. He declared "they deserved the grave censure of the Senate." Sir, I have great respect for the Senate of the United States, and I have respect for these three thousand clergymen. I suppose they care more for their own opinions, and the approbation of their own consciences, than even for the grave censure of this Senate.

He then went on to make use of one of those loose expressions, for which Mr. SUMNER censured him the other day so severely. He employed this language: "I venture to say that they [the clergymen] never saw the memorial they sent;—thus directly charging the religious teachers of our country with palming on the Senate a spurious document.

To this attack of the Senator from South Carolina, and others, on the clergy of New England, a portion of Mr. SUMNER's reply may be given as an illustra-

tion of the parliamentary character and perfect temper of his disquisitions:

"There are men in this Senate justly eminent for eloquence, learning, and ability; but there is no man here competent, except in his own concert, to sit in judgment on the clergy of New England. Honorable Senators—who have been so swift with criticism and sarcasm might profit by their example. *Perhaps the Senator from South Carolina, [Mr. FLETCHER,] who is not inaccessible to scholarship, might learn from them something of its grace. Perhaps the Senator from Virginia, [Mr. MASON,] who finds no sanction under the Constitution for any remonstrance from clergymen, might learn from them something of the privileges of an American citizen. Perhaps the Senator from Illinois, [Mr. DUNGLAS,] who precipitated this odious measure upon the country, might learn from them something of political wisdom."*

But this history of personalities is not complete. One of the greatest outbreaks is yet to come.

On the 26th June, 1854, Mr. predecessor, Mr. Rockwell, presented a memorial, signed by four thousand citizens of Boston, asking for the immediate repeal of the Fugitive Slave Act. That memorial was severely attacked, and Mr. SUMNER rose to vindicate it. He was followed by the Senator from South Carolina, who made a succession of assaults and insinuations.

Among other things, he characterized Mr. SUMNER's speech as "a species of rhetoric which is intended to feed the fires of fanaticism which he has helped to kindle in his own State—a species of rhetoric which is not becoming the gravity of this body."

And again, on the same page, the Senator says:

"When gentlemen rise and *flagrantly misrepresent* history, as that gentleman has done by a Fourth of July oration—by rapid rhetoric—by a species of rhetoric which, I am sorry to say, ought not to come from a scholar—a rhetoric with more fine color than real strength—I become impatient and tire."

Here, it will be observed, is a direct charge that Mr. SUMNER had *flagrantly misrepresented* history, that his speech was "rapid rhetoric," and a "Fourth of July oration." The Senator displays great sensibility because Mr. SUMNER charges him, in guarded phrase, with "a deviation from truth, with so much of passion as to save him from the suspicion of intentional aberration." And yet, with unflinching assurance, he openly charges Mr. SUMNER with *flagrant misrepresentation*, without any of that apology of passion which Mr. SUMNER conceded to him. Nor is this the first or the last time in which the Senator did this.

Again, on the same page, he insinuates that Mr. SUMNER was a "rhetorician playing a part." This is a favorite idea of the polite Senator. And yet again, on page 1517, first column, he breaks forth in insinuations against Mr. SUMNER, as follows:

"I do not want any of these flaming speeches here—calculated to excite, indirectly—to feed a flame without seeing where it shall extend. Sir, do not let us involve the country in a contest to be decided by mobs, infuriated by the *flaming* speeches of *arrogant orators*."

This attack upon Mr. SUMNER is without a parallel in the records of the Senate; but the Senator from South Carolina was not alone in this outrage. He was assisted, I regret to say, by other Senators; particularly by the Senator from Virginia, [Mr. MASON,] by the then Senator from Indiana, [Mr. PETTIT,] but I do not quote their words, for I am now dealing with the Senator from South Carolina.

To all these, Mr. SUMNER replied fully and triumphantly, in a speech which, though justly severe throughout, was perfectly parliamentary, and which was referred to at that time, and has been often mentioned since, as a specimen of the greatest severity, united with perfect taste and propriety.

The above imputation which had been heaped upon him, with regard to the Constitution, was completely encountered, and his position vindicated, by

the authority of Andrew Jackson, and the still earlier authority of Thomas Jefferson. On this point, no attempt has ever been made to answer him.

In the course of this speech, alluding to the Senator from South Carolina, Mr. SUMNER used words which I now adopt, not only for myself on this occasion, but also as an illustration of his course in this controversy:

"It is he, then, who is the offender. For myself, sir, I understand the sensibilities of Senators from slaveholding communities, and would not wound them by a superfluous word. Of Slavery I speak strongly, as I must; but thus far, even at the expense of my argument, I have avoided the contrasts, founded on denials of figures and facts, which are so obvious between the free States and slaveholding communities; especially have I shunned all allusion to South Carolina. But the venerable Senator, to whose discretion that State has intrusted its interests here, will not allow me to be still. God forbid that I should do injustice to South Carolina."

But the Senator from South Carolina was not to be silenced or appeased. He still returned to those personalities which flow so naturally and unconsciously from his lips. The early, bitter personal assaults were repeated. He charged Mr. SUMNER's speech with being "unfair in statement." This is one of the delicate accusations of the Senator. The next is bolder. He charged Mr. SUMNER as "guilty of historical perversion." Pray, with what face, after this, can he complain of my colleague? But he seems determined still to press this imputation in the most offensive form. He next charges my colleague with "*historical falsehood*, which the gentleman has committed in the fallacy of his *sectional* vision." It would be difficult to accumulate into one phrase more offensive suggestions; and yet the Senator now complains that he has had administered to him what he has so often employed himself.

All these are understood to have been accompanied by a manner more offensive than the words.

In those extracts you will see something of the Senator's insolence in contrast with the quiet manner of Mr. SUMNER, who, while defending his position, was perfectly parliamentary.

Other passages from the speech of the Senator might be quoted; but the patience of the Senate is well nigh exhausted by this long exhibition of personalities; therefore I will content myself with only one more. Here it is:

"I know, sir, he said the other day, that all he said was the effusion of an impulsive heart; but it was the effusion of his drawer. Talk to me about the effusions of the heart! What kind of effusions are those which escape from tables—from papers—played like cards sorted for the purpose? They are weapons prepared by contribution, and discharged in this body, with a view of gratifying the feelings of resentment and malice—with a view of wounding the pride of the State which I represent and through her to stab the reputation of the other Southern States. But, sir, we are above the dangers of open combat, and cannot be hurt by the assaults even of attempted assassination."

"We cannot be hurt by attempted assassination," exclaims the Senator from South Carolina!

Attempted assassination?

It ill becomes the Senator from South Carolina to use these words in connection with Massachusetts or the North. The arms of Massachusetts are Freedom, Justice, Truth? Strong in these, she is not driven to the necessity of resorting to "attempted assassination," either in or out of the Senate.

But the whole story is not yet told. I wish to refer to another assault made by the Senator which I witnessed myself a few days after I took a seat in his body. On the 23d of February, 1855, on one of the last days of the last session, to the bill introduced by the Senator from Connecticut [Mr. TOUCHEY] Mr. SUMNER moved an amendment providing for the repeal of the Fugitive Slave Act. He made some

remarks in support of that proposition. The Senator from South Carolina rose and interrupted him, saying, "I would ask him one question, which he, perhaps, will not answer *honestly*." Mr. SUMNER said, "I will answer any question." The Senator went on to ask questions, and received his answers; and then he said, speaking of Mr. SUMNER, "I know he is not a tactician, and I shall not take advantage of the infirmity of a man who does not know half as time exactly what he is about." This is indeed extraordinary language for the Senator from South Carolina to apply to the Senator from Massachusetts. I witnessed that scene. I then deemed the language insulting: the manner was more so. I hold in my hands the remarks of the *Louisville Journal*, a Southern press, upon this scene. I shall not read them to the Senate, for I do not wish to present anything which the Senator may even deem offensive. I will say, however, that his language and his deportment to my colleague on that occasion were aggressive and overbearing in the extreme. And his is the Senator who never makes assaults! But not content with assaulting Mr. SUMNER, he winds up his speech by a taunt at "Boston philanthropy." Surely, no person ever scattered assault more freely!

I have almost done. But something has occurred this session which illustrates the Senator's manner. Not content with making his own speeches, he interrupted the Senator from Missouri, [Mr. GEVERE], and desired him to insert in his speech an assault on Massachusetts. Here are his words:

"I wish my friend would incorporate into his speech an old law of Massachusetts which I have found. I would remind my friend of an old league between the four New England States, made while they were colonies, expressly repudiating trial by jury for the recclamation of fugitive slaves. They called them 'slaves,' too, or rather 'fugitive servants.' And they say they shall be delivered up on the certificate of one magistrate."

Here is another instance of the Senator's looseness of assertion, even on law, upon the knowledge of which he has plumed himself in this debate. Sir, there were no slaves in Massachusetts at that day. The law alluded to was passed in 1643. It was not until 1646, three years afterward, that the first slaves were imported into Massachusetts from the coast of Africa, and these very slaves were sent back to their native land at public expense. The following is a verbatim copy of the remarkable statute by which these Africans were returned to Guinea, at the expense of the Commonwealth:

"The General Court, conceiving themselves bound by the first opportunity to bear witness against the heinous and crying sin of man-stealing, also to prescribe such timely redress for what is past, and such a law for the future, as may sufficiently deter all those belonging to us to have to do in such vile and most odious conduct, justly abhorred by all good and just men, do order that the negro interpreter, with others and wofully taken, be by the first opportunity, at the charge of the County, for the present, sent to his native country of Guinea, and a letter with him, of the indignation of the Court thereabout, and justice thereof."

In the face of this act of 1646, the learned Senator from South Carolina wished his friend from Missouri to incorporate into his speech a false accusation against Massachusetts and the New England colonies. And he went so far as to assert that this old law contained an allusion to "slaves," when the word "slaves" was not mentioned, and "servants" only was employed.

Sir, I might here refer to the assault made by the Senator from South Carolina on the Senator from Iowa, [Mr. HARRIS], in which he taunted that Senator with being a clergyman, and modestly told him, in the face of the country, that "he understood Latin as well as that Senator understood English!"

Mr. BUTLER. I never taunted any gentleman with being a clergyman; and the Senator from Iowa will not say so. I said that I had respect for his vo-

ation, but when he attempted to correct my speech, I put him right.

Mr. WILSON. Whether it was a taunt or not, the Senator disclaims its being so, and I accept the disclaimer; but I apprehend it was not intended as a compliment to the Senator from Iowa, or that it was received as such by that Senator, particularly when taken in connection with the other taunting assumption of the Senator from South Carolina, that he "understood Latin as well as that Senator understood English."

Thus has Mr. SUMNER been by the Senator from South Carolina systematically assailed in this body, from the 28th of July, 1852, up to the present time—a period of nearly four years. He has applied to my colleague every expression calculated to wound the sensibilities of an honorable man, and to draw down upon him sneers, obloquy, and hatred, in and out of the Senate. In my place here, I now pronounce these continued assaults upon my colleague unparalleled in the history of the Senate.

I come now to speak for one moment of the late speech of my colleague, which is the alleged cause of the recent assault upon him, and which the Senator from South Carolina has condemned so abundantly. That speech—a thorough and fearless exposition of what Mr. SUMNER entitled the "Crime against Kansas"—from beginning to end, is marked by entire plainness. Things are called by their right names. The usurpation in Kansas is exposed, and also the apologies for it, successively. No words were spared which seemed necessary to the exhibition. In arraigning the *Crime*, it was natural to speak of those who sustained it. Accordingly, the Administration is constantly held up to condemnation. Various Senators who have vindicated this Crime are at once answered and condemned. Among these are the Senator from South Carolina, the Senator from Illinois, [Mr. DOUGLASS,] the Senator from Virginia [Mr. MASON,] and the Senator from Missouri [Mr. Geyer.] The Senator from South Carolina now complains of Mr. SUMNER's speech. Surely, it is difficult to see on what ground that Senator can make any such complaint. The speech was indeed severe—severe as truth—but in all respects parliamentary. It is true that it handles the Senator from South Carolina freely, but that Senator had spoken repeatedly in the course of the Kansas debate, once at length and elaborately, and at other times more briefly, and foisting himself into the speeches of other Senators, and identifying himself completely with the *Crime* which my colleague felt it his duty to arraign. It was natural, therefore, that his course in the debate, and his position, should be particularly considered. And in this work, Mr. SUMNER had no reason to hold back, when he thought of the constant, and systematic, and ruthless attacks, which, utterly without cause, he had received from that Senator. The only objection which the Senator from South Carolina can reasonably make to Mr. SUMNER is, that he struck a strong blow.

The Senator complains that the speech was printed before it was delivered. Here, again, is his accustomed inaccuracy. It is true that it was in the printer's hands, and was mainly in type, but it received additions and revisions after its delivery and was not put to press till then. Away with this petty objection! The Senator says that twenty thousand copies have gone to England. Here, again, is his accustomed inaccuracy. If they have gone, it is without Mr. SUMNER's agency. But the Senator foresees the truth. Sir, that speech will go to England; it will go to the continent of Europe; it has gone over the country, and has been read by the American people as no speech ever delivered in this body was read before. That speech will go down to coming ages. Whatever men may say of its sentiments—and coming ages will endorse its sentiments—

it will be placed among the ablest parliamentary efforts of our own age, or of any age.

The Senator from South Carolina tell us that the speech is to be condemned, and he quotes the venerable and distinguished Senator from Michigan, [Mr. CASS,] "I do not know what Mr. SUMNER could stand. The Senator says he could not stand the censure of the Senator from Michigan. *I could*; and I believe there are a great many in this country whose powers of endurance are as great as my own. I have great respect for that venerable Senator; but the opinions of no Senator here are potential in the country. This is a Senate of equals. The judgment of the country is to be made up on the records formed here. The opinions of the Senator from Michigan, and of other Senators here, are to go into the record, and will receive the verdict of the people. By that I am willing to stand."

The Senator from South Carolina tells us that the speech is to be condemned. It has gone out to the country. It has been printed by the million. It has been scattered broadcast amongst seventeen millions of Northern freemen who can read and write. The Senator condemns it; South Carolina condemns it; but South Carolina is only a part of this Confederacy, and but a part of the Christian and civilized world. South Carolina makes rice and cotton, but South Carolina contributes little to make up the judgment of the Christian and civilized world. I value her rice and cotton more than I do her opinions on questions of scholarship and eloquence, of patriotism or of liberty.

Mr. President, I have no desire to assail the Senator from South Carolina, or any other Senator in this body; but I wish to say now, that we have had quite enough of this asserted superiority, social and political. We were told, some time ago, by the Senator from Alabama, [Mr. CLAY,] that those of us who entertained certain sentiments frowned upon him and other Southern men, if they permitted us to associate with them. This is strange language to be used in this body. I never frowned upon that Senator. I never sought his acquaintance, and I do not know that I should feel myself honored if I had it. I treat him as an equal here—I wish always to treat him respectfully; but when he tells me or my friends that we frown upon him or his associates, I say to him that I have never sought, and never shall seek, any other acquaintance than what official intercourse requires, with a man who declared, on the floor of the Senate, that he would do what Henry Clay once said "no gentleman could do"—hunt a fugitive slave.

The Senator from Virginia, not now in his seat, [Mr. MASON,] when Mr. SUMNER closed his speech, saw fit to tell the Senate that his hands would be soiled by contact with ours. The Senator is not here; I wish he were. I have simply to say that I know nothing in that Senator, moral, intellectual or physical, which entitles him to use such language towards members of the Senate, or any portion of God's creation. I know nothing in the State from which he comes, rich as it is in the history of the past, that entitles him to speak in such a manner. I am not here to assail Virginia. God knows I have not a feeling in my heart against her or against her public men; but I do say it is time that these arrogant assumptions ceased here. This is no place for assumed social superiority, as though certain Senators held the keys of cultivated and refined society. Sir, they do not hold the keys, and they shall not hold over me the plantation whip.

I wish always to speak kindly towards every man in this body. Since I came here, I have never asked an introduction to a Southern member of the Senate, not because I have any feelings against them, for God knows I have not; but I knew that they believed I held opinions hostile to their interests, and I

supposed they would not desire my society. I have never wished to obtrude myself on their society, so that certain Senators could do with me, as they have boasted they did with others—refuse to receive their advances, or refuse to recognise them on the floor of the Senate. Sir, there is not a Collicie in the Guano Islands of Peru who does not think the Celestial Empire the whole Universe. There are a great many men who have swung the whip over the plantation who think they not only rule the plantation but make up the judgment of the world, and hold the keys not only to political power, as they have done in this country, but to social life.

The Senator from South Carolina assails the resolutions of my State with his accustomed looseness, as springing from ignorance, passion, prejudice, excitement. Sir, the testimony before the House Committee sustains all that is contained in those resolutions. Massachusetts has spoken her opinions; and although the Senator has quoted the *Boston Courier* to-day—and I would not rob him of any consolation he can derive from that source—I know Massachusetts, and I can tell him that, of the one million two hundred thousand people of Massachusetts, you cannot find in the State one thousand—Administration office-holders included—who do not look with loathing and execration upon the outrage on the person of their Senator and the honor of their State. The sentiment of Massachusetts, of New England, of the North, approaches unanimity. Massachusetts has spoken her opinions. The Senator is welcome to assail them, if he chooses; but they are on the record. They are made up by the verdict of her people, and they understand the question, and from their verdict there is no appeal.

Mr. President, I have spoken freely; I shall continue always to speak freely. I seek no controversy with any man; but I shall express my sentiments frankly, and the more frankly because on this floor my colleague has been smitten down for words spoken in debate, and because there are those who, unmindful of the Constitution of their country, claim the right thus to question us.

After this speech of Mr. WILSON, Mr. BUTLER indulged in some discursive remarks, and ended by saying—

As I suppose the Senator [Mr. WILSON] is to be considered, in some sense, the historian of his State, I do ire to ask him how many battles were fought in Massachusetts during the Revolutionary war?

Mr. WILSON. I will answer the Senator. The battles fought in Massachusetts during the Revolution were few, because they were not necessary. Our Massachusetts men met the enemy at Lexington, at Concord Bridge, at Bunker Hill, and on the heights of Dorchester. They would have met them on every spot in Massachusetts, but the enemy took good care right early to get and keep out of that State.

The Senator said yesterday, as I understood him, that "South Carolina had shed hogheads of blood where Massachusetts had shed gallons," during the Revolution.

Mr. BUTLER. On the battle-fields of the two States.

Mr. WILSON. I heard no such limitation. I understood the Senator to mean that South Carolina had contributed hogheads of the blood of her sons, where Massachusetts had only contributed gallons, to the Revolution. Sir South Carolina furnished five thousand five hundred soldiers; Massachusetts sixty-nine thousand; and they drove the enemy, and followed the enemy, and met the enemy on the battle-fields of the Revolution, from the Northern to the Southern boundaries of the Republic—from the St. Lawrence to the St. Mary's. There were but few battles fought on the soil of Massachusetts, for the reason that the enemy thought it was safer to leave

Massachusetts, and go to South Carolina. The British army thought it was not safe to be very near the battle-fields of Concord of Lexington, and of Bunker Hill, and it left Massachusetts and took good care to keep out of a Commonwealth where friends always find a welcome, and foes are apt to find a grave.

During the Revolution, a portion of the people of South Carolina, the Gadsdens, the Rutledges, the Laurenses, the Sumters, the Marias, made as great sacrifices for the cause of independence as any patriots in any portion of the land; but the fact cannot be denied, and all these patriots, including even Marion, convict South Carolina of the fact that she had a large class of Tories. There was a civil war in that State—and, more than that, thousands and tens of thousands of her sons sought protection under the British flag. When the army of Greene was starving, the British army in Charleston was receiving all that the fertile valleys of South Carolina could produce, carry into Charleston, and exchange for British gold. When Greene and his patriot army wanted oxen and horses to carry supplies, they were hustled off into the forests by people who had, to quote the words of General Greene to General Barnwell, "far greater attachment to their interests than zeal for the service of their country."

Mr. BUTLER. Let me ask the gentleman who fed Greene's army at that time?

Mr. WILSON. "Who fed Greene's army?" That army was hardly fed at all—at any rate, it was but poorly fed and scantily clothed. I apprehend sir, that Greene's army—like the schoolboy's whistle, that whistled itself—fed itself.

I have no disposition to assail the Senator's State. I should blush if I could say aught against the patriots of South Carolina, or even cease to feel gratitude for their efforts—their prompt response to the patriots of my own State in the early days of the Revolution; but, sir, Gadsden, Burke, Marion, Ramsay, Barnwell, and the patriots of that period, have borne this evidence, that South Carolina was weakened in that contest by the existence of Slavery. That was what Mr. SUMNER charged, and on a former occasion demonstrated; and that, I take it, no man here or elsewhere can deny.

The Senator tells us that he has complimented the battle-fields of Massachusetts, the fields of Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill. That Senator, and the constituents of that Senator, can stand upon those sacred spots, and breathe something of the spirit of Liberty that makes them immortal. He can utter his sentiments—sentiments so little in harmony with the gallant dead that sleep beneath those hallowed sods, or the living who now guard them under the protection of law, and a public sentiment nurtured and sustained by free speech. I should be proud to tread the battle-fields of South Carolina, hallowed by patriot blood. Yes, sir, it would afford me intense gratification to stand upon those stricken fields, so dear to every true American heart; but I do not know that I could do so without suppressing those cherished sentiments of liberty, for the vindication of which patriot blood was poured out at Camden, Guilford, Eutaw, and Hobkirk Hill.

But all these allusions and reflections upon the history of the past afford me no gratification. I say to the Senator from South Carolina, that he, and I, and all of us, had far better turn from the past, cease to reflect upon the services of our States in the Revolutionary era, and deal with the living questions which we must meet in this age—questions that have great issues, involving the interests of our common country and the rights of human nature. He, and I, and all of us here, ought to strive to settle these great issues for the good of our common country, and the whole people of the country, bond and free.